

Blackbraes and Shieldhill  
Parish Church  
linked with  
Muiravonside Parish Church  
Winter 2019



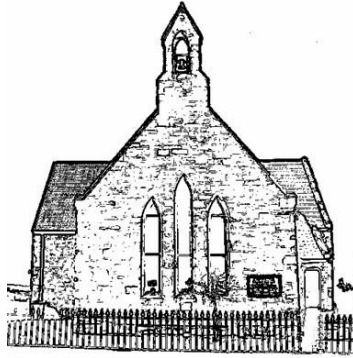
[www.bsandm-church.org.uk](http://www.bsandm-church.org.uk)

Interim Moderator Rev Dr Jean W Gallacher

Locum Minister: Rev Sandra Mathers OLM

Registered Charity  
Blackbraes and Shieldhill SC 002512  
Muiravonside SC 007571





**Blackbraes and Shieldhill**  
**Worship every Sunday at 10.00am**



**Muiravonside**  
**Worship every Sunday at 11.30am**

## **A Christmas Message From the Interim Moderator**

“God so loved the world he sent his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” John 3: 16 NIV

### **The First Sign of Christmas**

Dear Friends,

According to an old television advert the first sign of Christmas is Quality Street wrappers falling to the ground, like colourful snowflakes! For those who love chocolate this image, of empty wrappers floating down round their feet, might well be the first sign of Christmas.

Others, however, might agree with TESCO who want to “Bring it On” For them it is the idea of filling our shopping trolley with every item that captures the spirit of Christmas, from mince pies to colourful ties, that is the first sign of Christmas.

For others, the first sign of Christmas is seen in gardens decorated with a great big Santa; well lit up reindeer and a big bouncy snowman, not forgetting the strings of colourful lights that are long enough to lap the world not once but twice! Certainly lovely to see; time consuming to set up, and an interesting way of demonstrating use of time, talents and possessions!

From a commercial, consumer, point of view, these are indeed the first signs of Christmas. Signs that draw us in; make us spend more than we probably need to, yet in a big childlike way, fill us with the warmth of giving, a strange inner satisfaction or self gratification and the joy of a Merry Christmas.

Beneath these surface images that we cannot fail to see, there are, however, hidden signs of Christmas. Signs that are, from a pastoral perspective, of greater significance, because they can easily be missed.

For many people, more than we perhaps care to or dare to admit, the first sign of Christmas is seen in the growing tension that engulfs their life as they grapple with a costly celebration and an empty purse or wallet. For others the first sign of Christmas is a deeper sense of sadness, resulting from the painful loss of a loved one, or the resurgence of unresolved grief, as they struggle with the “Ho-Ho-Ho” of society and the “Oh No, I’m on my own!”

The first sign of Christmas might well be different for all of us.

For those of us who take John 3 verse 16 to heart, the first sign of Christmas is God's love being made real to us when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, the Word that was declared in the beginning of time.

In the past, there was a Christmas Eve tradition of Blessing the Crib, recognising the significance of the manger, longing for the arrival of the Christ child, and maybe even giving the animals their place in the Christmas story! I don't know if the Blessing of the Crib still takes place, but I like the idea of focusing on the manger and declaring the first sign of Christmas to be the Word made flesh

God's Word begins and ends with love. Love that holds us when we are hurting, laughs with us when our hearts are full of joy, gives us reassurance when the path is rough and guides us when we have decisions to make.

In churches across the land, and indeed across the world, the first sign of Christmas will be seen in the lighting of the first Advent candle, a candle that radiates God's love.

May the Light of Christ shine in our hearts, in our homes, in our churches, in our communities and in our world, for when it shines, we do indeed see the first and last sign of Christmas.



**POEM**

**The First Sign of Christmas**

Written by Jean Wardlaw Gallacher © JWG 2016

The first sign of Christmas might happen to be  
A great big colourful Christmas tree  
Or it could be carols, or a Christmas song  
Encouraging us to Sing-a-long  
Perhaps it is the sound of the reindeers' bells  
Ringing from rooftops as laughter swells  
In the hearts of children who expectantly  
Look for their Christmas gifts, wrapped brightly  
For those of us who hold to God's Holy Word  
Much of the above seems quite absurd  
The first sign is surely not a new golf glove  
Those who believe know it's God's Word LOVE

With warmest regards and God's richest blessings,  
To you and yours,  
From  
**Jean W Gallacher**

**Rev Dr Jean W Gallacher**  
**Interim Moderator**

### **Funerals**

***'The Lord will protect you as you come and go, both now and forevermore'.***



### **Muiravonside Parish**

Anne Ingram

### **Muiravonside Choral Society**

Muiravonside Choral Society will be holding their annual Christmas Concert on Sunday 8th December at 3.30pm in Muiravonside Church.

Please come along and enjoy some lovely Christmas Carols and songs. Some old and some new.

Tea and coffee will be served after the concert.

Hope to see you there, all are welcome.

**June de Angelis, Secretary.**



### **Mid Winter Break**

During the last week in October, my wife Fay and I set out by car for a three day stay at Inverness.

Heading north from Perth, some stunning views and colours of trees surrounded us making the journey pass too quickly at times. From Dunkeld to Pitlochry, then Blair Atholl onward towards Aviemore, after a bowl of soup at the House of Bruar, made us think how fortunate we were able healthwise for such an outing.

Arriving safely at Inverness, we parked the car and left it for the duration of our stay, well wrapped up, many good walks along the banks of the River Ness, combined with cosy places for tea or coffee. It was like time had flown too quickly.

When cold sunny days emerge, nothing can beat Scotland for scenery at this time of year.

**John Robertson**







### **Focus on the little things**

It is the little things that usually have the greatest impact in life - a compliment, a smile, a thank you, a hug. It's these things that make up a positive outlook.

For further reflection : Luke 19:17



### **It gets easier**

It's always the beginning of a task that seems the most challenging - riding a bike, playing the piano, learning a language. It's most difficult just before it starts to get easier. So take courage: when it seems daunting, your life could be about to turn for the better.

For further reflection :

2 Timothy:2-3

Matthew 24:13

From: "God's Little Book of Hope." by Richard Daly

**Submitted by John Robertson**

## Coincidence ?

When researching the stories behind the soldiers on the war memorial I needed confirmation that Thomas Blackley Gibb and Samuel Blackley were cousins. A search on the internet saw a reply from a Jess Blackley from Florida confirming they were full cousins as Thomas's mother and Samuel's father were brother and sister.

She then drew to my attention that we were 4th cousins!

She was also the web master for the world wide Penman families and wondered if there were any Penmans stayed here?? If you are a Penman or have a story to add to the Penman group just contact me and I will pass it on.

## Jim Currie.



### **Muiravonside - From the Treasurer**

Another financial year is quickly drawing to a close and I feel I have to point out our current financial status, it was not that so very long ago I was reporting to the session that our cash to hand was in the region of £35,000 to £40,000, at our recent session meeting I had to report that the cash to hand in the bank is £29,907, year on year our local finances are decreasing.

The Church of Scotland is going to be making big changes in the not too distant future if we as a congregation want Muiravonside to remain a warm and welcoming church we must dig deep and look again at our weekly/monthly donations and try to give just a little bit extra, it is amazing what a extra 50p or a £1 can make, I am sorry for being a moan but I just feel I must advise the congregation of our current financial status.

Best wishes to all for Christmas and the New Year

**Moira Sharp**

**Muiravonside Treasurer**



## **Walking with a Friend**

Most of the walking I do is with Sally, my basset hound. She is the eighth basset that we have had the pleasure of sharing our house.

When we took Sally for her first visit to the vet when she was a brand new puppy, 9 weeks old, the receptionist, who knew us as she had worked for the practice for quite some time, didn't say, "What a beautiful puppy," as I expected her reaction to be, she actually said, "You haven't got another one of those have you?".

Each Basset has been different and no other has been like Sally.

She, more or less, is obedient. She doesn't chase all over the countryside looking for hares. (The black and white basset, Hoover, did things like that.)

Sally is a relaxed dog and gets on well with other dogs and cats.

In common with the past bassets that we have owned, she prefers to go to different places for her daily walk. She is a more enthusiastic walker when she goes to different places every day for her morning walk and loves leafy paths. With these wee legs, you will fully appreciate that she does not speed along like a border collie or a cocker spaniel, she travels at a walking pace.

In fact, both my children were good walkers because bassets walk at a toddlers' pace.

Bassets are scent hounds and so will stop to investigate any good scent that tickles their noses. They close their ears to human calls; so really, one just has to wait knowing that the dog will come when it is ready to come. Other bassets that we have owned have disappeared into woodland with their noses glued to the trail. On that occasion one waits and the basset will, eventually, emerge from the exact place where it left the path. Sally's nose picks out dead things, Tasha, our first Basset, had a liking for discarded fish suppers. Hoover would have followed hares if we had allowed him to.

When Hoover was around my parents were still alive. They had a wood at the side of their house and also owned a Jack Russel. Their dog was walked in this wood every day. The terrier knew where to find every rabbit hole in the wood and, when we visited, Hoover visited all the rabbit holes with the terrier. This was one of the periods in our

life when we had two bassets. Hoover's friend was Casper. Casper loved his walks, his dinner and a comfy place to sleep. He most certainly didn't care for rabbit holes. One spring, just before Crufts, I spent a week with my parents. Casper was at boot camp. We walked through this wood twice a day with a longer walk once a day. This longer walk went through the local wood and then on to the path that followed the River Nith. Casper was exhausted but did very well the following week at Crufts. He had a real sparkle. Two rehoused bassets and one rescued basset followed them-Oscar, Ruby and Lady.

Tasha, Hoover and Oscar would disappear into the undergrowth, following a trail. When this happens, it is best to stay at the spot where they disappeared because, minutes later, the dog will appear back at your side after having reappeared at exactly the same spot. You can appreciate that my dog walking involves a bit of standing around, I often have to wait on Sally catching up. I started my interest in bird watching when I had my first basset. When my daughter was little we counted wild flowers for the Scottish Wildlife Trust. Of course, we did this whilst walking our dog.

It is was at this time that I began to fully appreciated the diversity of nature and the beauty of this world that God had created for us. It is while engaged in this daily activity that I feel closest to Jesus, where I often have a conversation with him.

In forty years of basset hound ownership, I have journeyed many miles accompanied by a faithful hound. We have walked in many beautiful places, through forests, along rivers and canals and up hills. I could write a book about the paths that surround Falkirk as I think that we have walked most of them. Falkirk is the best served town in Britain with its diverse collection of footpaths according to a recent poll by The Ramblers' Charity.

In quiet places I often feel Jesus' presence walking beside me, keeping me company. Sunday's walk took us to Plean Country Park where the autumn colours were glorious. Where to tomorrow; we will decide in the morning. One thing I do know, it won't be Plean.

**Rena and Sally Basset**

### **A Recipe for Scot's Biscuits**

This recipe came from my Mum's recipe book. I think that it probably came from the back of a Scot's Porridge Oat packet.

#### **Ingredients**

100g margarine

100 g sugar

200g porridge oats

2 level dessert spoons of flour

2 level dessert spoons milk

1 pinch baking powder (If you use SR flour you do not need baking powder)

#### **Method**

1. Cream until light and fluffy marg and sugar
2. Work in porridge oats, flour, milk and baking powder.(if used)
3. Tip your mixture on to a floured board and squeeze together
4. Roll out about 1/4inch thick and place on a greased tray.
5. I line the tray with non-stick paper as I find that these biscuits tend to stick.
6. Bake in a mod oven 160°C for 20 minutes until firm and light brown
7. Cool on a wire tray



**Rena**

## **The Nativity Play**

For many years I was a primary school teacher in Caithness, so Christmas brings back memories of busy but enjoyable times spent organising parties and rehearsing Nativity Plays over the weeks before breaking up for the holidays.

One Nativity Play I remember is from a two teacher school set among fields in a very small village. This play was an exciting event when the parents came to watch their offspring perform and the local minister came and said a few words and introduced the hymns that we all sang.

The excited children who were taking part in the play were looking lovely in the costumes their mothers had made for them. As teachers we were confident that all would go well as it had in the past years.

We were somewhat worried about the behaviour of one very small boy who was a newcomer to the school and was being fostered by a family from the village. This boy was dressed in his shepherd's outfit and was carrying a soft toy lamb and looking the picture of innocence. The older children in the group were aware of his highly unpredictable nature and kept a firm grip on him.

The play began and all went well from start to finish and we sighed in relief as smiles were seen all round the hall.

The minister stepped forward to say the final prayer, heads were bowed and eyes closed, when suddenly the peace was shattered by a loud shout from the little new boy as he hurled his lamb straight at the minister then took off at speed through the door.

However no harm was done and he was soon caught and the minister who had children of his own, accepted our apologies with a smile.

I attended and helped at many such plays every year and I'm glad to say that most of them were incident free. Though some might say these little incidents were the best part!

**Phyllis McIntosh**





## News from South Africa

October 2019



Dear Friends,

We were busy during the month of June. Our friend Thembeke Mpako -Ntusi was ordained a non-stipendiary priest of the Diocese of Saldana Bay in the Anglican Church. This took us to Cape Town where we also had a few days rest on a wine farm. A week earlier we attended the consecration of Thembeke's brother, Dabula Mpako, as Roman Catholic Archbishop of Pretoria and his investiture, two weeks later, after he had travelled to Rome to receive his *pallium* (stole of office) from Pope Francis. We were invited to join a family dinner in his honour.

We have given thanks for the advances made by some of our former FedSem students: Bishop Malusi Mpumlwana as General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches; Rev Purity Malinga (a classmate of Sandra's) as Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of South Africa; Rev Moses Madywabe as Bishop of the Diocese of Khahlamba (Queenstown) of the Anglican Church of South Africa; Rev Gicks Moyane as Moderator of the Synod of the Evangelical Presbyterian church.

And Graham's previous post-doctoral fellow, Prof Jakub Urbaniak, has been promoted to Head of Research at St Augustine's College.

In July, along with one of his colleagues, Prof Yolanda Dreyer, Graham was asked to present a paper to the National Conference of Correctional Services (Prisons) Chaplains on Spiritual care of chaplains, officers and prisoners. This was a good experience as a number of his former students are now Chaplains and it was good, as always to see where they have ended up – in prison (oops! – correctional services facilities)!

The National Research Foundation academic rating season has passed and



Graham has been asked to remain on the Religious Studies and Theology Panel for yet another year. He has also been involved in the accreditation process of the Council on Higher Education where some colleges and universities have been developing new and improving older programmes.

The teaching season is also over as we are now in end of year examinations. Marking now takes over our lives, and Sandra is busy with language editing as students press on towards submission of their dissertations and theses by the due dates which are fast approaching.

Recently we had a visit from Thembeke, and Craig Mewha from Cumbernauld. We four visited the Black Rhino Game Reserve in the Pilanesburg mountain range (close to Sun City) for a few days.

At present, we have Rev Andreas Weber from Basle, Switzerland as a house guest for two months. He is on long sabbatical leave from the Protestant Church in Switzerland. He is focussing on Bible translation and interpretation in an African context in addition to getting to know our African context by spending ten days in our Presbytery of Mthatha in the Eastern Cape.

Both St Augustine's College and the Baptist Theological Seminary have invited Graham to teach again in 2020. In addition, St Augustine's want him to develop and teach a new honours module on Historical Theology and teach on Preaching, while the Baptists want him to develop and teach a new honours module on the History of Christianity in Africa – busy times ahead!

We are now into summer with some blisteringly hot days. Unfortunately they are not yet matched by the rains which we need and are overdue.

We are coming to the UK for a family Christmas and will, hopefully, see some of you then.

**With our very best Wishes!**  
**Graham & Sandra**



Drew's  
view

## The Greatest Present Ever Given

There is something about railway stations that is absolutely compelling. So many mixed emotions.

People in a desperate hurry. Late for work. Trying to navigate their way through crowds of people in the station concourse with all possible haste. People saying "Goodbye" with abject sadness to a loved one who is going away for a while. On the next platform, the joys of a loved one arriving can be witnessed and as the crowds of people come through the little gates, this special person is suddenly spotted with utter joy and two people are reunited again.

Contrast this with people who are going on holiday or simply enjoying a day trip, with all the time in the world, enjoying a cup of coffee as they wait for their train to be announced.

There are always plenty of seats where you can sit and watch all these little dramas unfold and I happened to find myself sitting on one of them just a few weeks ago while I was waiting for a train at Glasgow Queen Street Station. The station is being refurbished just now and for a while the seats have been situated very close together in one long line and people arriving are greeted with what looks like a gallery of spectators, all seated and waiting for a show to start.

Due to the proximity of the seats you sometimes just cannot help but overhear the conversations of the people beside you - even if you are not the nosiest person in the world! Although you have never met them and will probably never see them again in your lifetime, for just that few moments, you enter their world.

I happened to be seated beside two young ladies who looked like they were in their late twenties. Of course, in these situations you engage a "neutral face" and never look at the people or act as if you are in the least bit interested in what they are talking about. They were obviously very good friends, but one sounded very sad and the other sounded like she was trying to offer words of comfort.

I have changed the two women's names, although I can't even remember what their names were, but I'm certain the names I've given them are quite different! I've also changed their appearances to protect their privacy. However, the following conversation is absolutely as it happened between them.

Uttering a long sigh, and then pausing for a second or two as if trying

to compose her voice, Fiona who had long chestnut brown hair was sitting closest to me. After another pause, sounding absolutely distraught, she finally remarked, "Hazel has been acting very huffy lately."

Jennifer, her friend sitting beside her was a bit taller and had medium length blonde hair. After a short intake of breath which almost sounded like a gasp and looking absolutely surprised, she answered:

"That is so strange! I've never known her to be like *that* before."

This seemed to make Fiona even sadder and in an even more morose tone replied,

"She phoned me yesterday. She never wants to see me again." Then sounding close to tears, she added very quietly, "She's ashamed that I am her sister. I can't get over *that*, but you'll never guess what she said to me next."

Although my face didn't belie any sort of interest in what they were saying, just like the faces of the other people who were sitting nearby, I was quite certain that like I, they were all waiting with bated breath!

"What did she say?" asked Jennifer finally with a curiosity etched in her voice which mirrored mine and the rest of the folks surreptitiously listening.

Then ... just at that very moment ... their train was announced on the loudspeakers!

"Tell you on the train!"

Both women then left the seats very quickly and headed directly to platform 2.

You could almost hear the loud "Awww!!!" that was echoing through both my own mind and the minds of all the nearby people within earshot as we sat on these seats and realised we would never know what Fiona's sister had said to add to her distress!

My train was announced a few moments later and during the journey back from Glasgow, as the train sped through Bishopbriggs, I sat and thought about these two ladies whose world I had entered for just a few moments. I felt so sorry for Fiona even although I had never met her and her friend Jennifer, or even her sister Hazel in my life and wasn't likely to ever again.

It got me thinking though that as humans God has blessed us all with an unique quality. There I was sitting amongst all those people who

were strangers in a row of seats and yet I felt desperately sorry for the two women sitting beside me whom I did not know, as well as absolute sympathy for them.

I am pretty sure that the other people sitting around them felt much the same because just after the two women hastily left, the people in close proximity looked a little sad. Just like I, they would never know what sister Hazel had said to a sad Fiona. It was as if we had all watched the same movie and it had abruptly been cut off just as it got to the nitty gritty part where all is revealed.

I marvelled though at the fact that we can feel great empathy for each other, even if we are total strangers. What made me even sadder was the thought that it is not that long now until Christmas time when families and friends get together. I can still hear the sadness in Fiona's voice as she mournfully told her friend about what had happened between herself and Hazel. She sounded too as if she had no idea what she could have done or said to cause such a reaction.

I will never know if the two sisters will manage to be reunited in time for Christmas. Sometimes happy endings just do not take place in real life, like they do in these wonderful sentimental movies we see at this time of year where chestnuts roast perpetually on an open fire and it always snows just in time for Christmas day!

However, I can hazard a guess that there will be a happy ending and I'll tell you why!

The answer actually came from Fiona herself.

While she was sitting beside me in this busiest of places surrounded by a myriad of people rushing by, station announcements, and people being reunited with each other which must have made her feel even worse, there was one thing that she didn't do.

At no point while she was confiding with her friend did she react with anger.

I don't have a sister but if something like what Fiona was describing had happened to me, and my sister had practically disowned me, if I was sitting telling Jennifer about it I would probably react angrily and say in injured tones,

"Who does she think she is? How dare she say a thing like *that* to me? What have I done to deserve *this*?"

However, Fiona acted in a much better way than I ever would have.

Just abject sadness and a sense that she was absolutely distraught that her sister seemed to have disowned her. She obviously still loved her sister very much and as Lenzie station whizzed by and I sat in comfort on board this 100 mile per hour electric train, I was very touched by this.

That is why I know in my heart that these two ladies will be reunited.

Love is such a precious gift. Ephesians chapter four, verse two has a sentence which describes so aptly the character of this very sad but lovely lady who was sitting beside me in that busy station :

“Be always humble, gentle, and patient. Show your love by being tolerant with one another.”

Fiona’s love for her sister will conquer any differences that they had. I am not a gambling man but I would have bet that even as I was getting off the train after arriving at Falkirk High Station, Fiona and Jennifer were maybe stepping off their train in the Glasgow area, (their train at platform 2 was going to Anniesland) and at that very moment were on their way to visit Hazel.

Even now, with just a few weeks to go before Christmas, I am pretty certain Fiona will have already given her sister the greatest Christmas present ever given. This present doesn’t cost a penny but it is more precious than the most expensive perfume in the world or any other luxury Christmas item we are seeing being advertised on tv just now.

That gift is love.

It is also the greatest present that God has given us – the capacity to love and to forgive. As 1 Corinthians chapter 13, verse 13 says: “Meanwhile these three remain: faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love.”

Sometimes this gift of love can do miraculous things and just like the old sentimental Christmas movies, a happy ending can and indeed does happen.

**Drew Robertson**

# Aboriginal Lord's Prayer

You are our Father, you live in Heaven  
We talk to you, Father you are good (repeat)  
We believe your word Father, we are children  
Give us bread today (repeat)  
We have done wrong, we are sorry  
Help us Father not to sin again (repeat)  
Others have done wrong to us and  
We are sorry for them Father today (repeat)  
Help us from doing wrong Father  
Save us all from the evil one (repeat)  
You are our Father you live in Heaven  
We talk to you Father you are good (repeat)

Submitted by Norma Jack

(To follow in our Easter edition - An 1800s version.)



### Website

Our magazines are now available on our website :

[www.bsandm-church.org.uk](http://www.bsandm-church.org.uk).

If anyone would prefer to access them this way, instead of paper format, please let your Church Elder know.

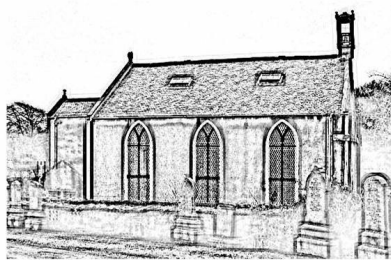
As well as saving paper, and trees, you would receive the magazine in colour. It could also be enlarged if you need to see it in large print.



### Muiravonside Church Facebook Page

Muiravonside Parish Church now has a Facebook page which gives all the latest news of events and can be viewed at:

<https://www.facebook.com/muiravonsideparishchurch/>



## **Weekends at Granny's**

Recently I visited Maggie's, the cancer support charity near Forth Valley Royal Hospital. Various activities are on offer there and one which took my interest was a creative writing afternoon. Mentioning it to my family, my two daughters also were interested and decided to accompany me. Off we went together one Monday afternoon. Enjoying the usual cuppa and introductions to each other, the tutor began the lesson.

She distributed a poem by Claire Askew. "Catalogue of my grandmother's sayings" to start the discussion and we were encouraged to think about grandmothers or friends and various sayings that they might have used regularly. This brought to mind many happy and sometimes humorous memories. But we set now to the task. We were given fifteen minutes to write a piece similar to that of Claire Askew. We three wrote something entirely different from each other but my younger daughter's contribution brought tears to my eyes.

It follows:

### **Weekends at Granny's**

Long drive on a Friday night

Sleeping before Skinflats

Granny at the stair window peeking through the curtains

Bed settee made up in the living room

Hot milk or Ovaltine?

Up early on Saturday morning

Why does Granny walk so fast?

We chase behind her along Sheddocksley Drive to the terminus.

Where is she taking us?



To the café across the road for a pie and gravy  
Maybe a walk round the Terrace Gardens  
Maybe to BHS or CandAs to buy clothes.  
It's raining let's have a carpet picnic or  
Let's play shoppies with tins from the cupboards.  
Can we go over the park to watch the shinty?  
Saturday night- Alex and Iris come in for a sing song  
Get the record player from the front bedroom cupboard  
Play the 78s who's favourite is first?  
Sunday lunch, pull out the big table  
Set it up in front of the window  
Sunday after noon film starts on TV  
Time to leave for the long drive home.

by Eileen Campbell

As Granny grew older she was unable to live by herself and so she decided to leave her dearly loved corner of the north east of Scotland. She came to live with us where she stayed for twelve years. Although she missed the bustle of Aberdeen city, she enjoyed staying in California. She made friends became a faithful member of the Woman's Guild and attended Blackbraes Church regularly.

Although we made many more journeys north to visit family and friends, my family agree that none had the excitement of these monthly visits. Fridays after tea, five of us packed ourselves into a small car with no seatbelts or child seats ready for the three hour long journey north no motorways but squealing happily when we spied Granny waiting for us waving from the stair window.

**Lorna Coulter**

## **ORDER OF ST JOHN**

The work of the Order of St John of Jerusalem at home and abroad is imaginative and deeply effective. I have been Prior of the Order in Scotland for the last four years and I have two more years of my tenure to go. I am also a member of the Grand Council Executive Committee. It has been an exciting and challenging time; travelling widely in Scotland, from Inverness to Dumfries and Dunbarton to Dundee, and overseas, enjoying the development of opportunities for 'enhancing and saving life'. My wife, Sue, is a huge support and her medical knowledge is invaluable. Our annual visit to the Eye Hospital Group in Jerusalem, this year included a visit to the Anabta Clinic in the North, a Maternity Hospital in Bethlehem and the Hospital in Gaza.

There are twelve Priories worldwide; England, Scotland, Wales, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada, Kenya, South Africa, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia.

Scotland's focus is wide and comprehensive; from providing Patient Transport and First Responders to Public Access Defibrillators and CPR Training, to supporting Mountain Rescue and Safety. We also provide Sheltered Accommodation at Archibald Russell Court in Polmont.

The St John Movement can be traced back to the Knights Hospitallers of the 11th Century. It continues to be a Christian Order of Chivalry and Charity. The Preceptory at Torphichen has a fascinating history and the Knights from Scotland used it as a place of refuge and worship. We have an annual service at Torphichen. We also have an Annual Festival at St John's tide towards the end of June, hosted by one of the twelve Scottish Areas in a major place of worship – next year Dunblane Cathedral.

The Grand Prior of the Order of St John is HRH The Duke of Gloucester. Prince Richard's father also held this key appointment. Her Majesty the Queen is Sovereign Head of the Order.

As well as work at home, St John Scotland has long supported the St John Eye Hospital of Jerusalem as well as supporting a 'Mother

and Child' Project in Malawi. A similar project in the townships of South Africa was the brainchild of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. We will be making our second visit to Malawi before Christmas.

The most heartening aspect of the Order's work is the great support we get from Volunteers who are firmly committed to our ethos. Many young people engage with the Order. They provide a real stimulus to the energy generated in our life-saving work and give great confidence for the future.

You can follow the work of the order at [www.stjohnscotlandscotland.org.uk](http://www.stjohnscotlandscotland.org.uk) and [www.orderofstjohn.org](http://www.orderofstjohn.org)

**Mark Strudwick**



### **Psalm 23**

The Lord is my Shepherd...

THAT'S RELATIONSHIP!

I shall not want...

THAT'S SUPPLY

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures...

THAT'S REST!

He leadeth me beside still waters...

THAT'S REFRESHMENTS!

He restoreth my soul...

THAT'S HEALING!

He leadeth me in the paths

Of righteousness...

THAT'S GUIDANCE!

For His name sake...

THAT'S PURPOSE!

Yea, though I walk through the valley

Of the shadow of death...

THAT'S CHALLENGE!

I will fear no evil...

THAT'S ASSURANCE!

For Thou art with me...

THAT'S FAITHFULLNESS!

Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me

THAT'S SHELTER

Thou preparest a table before me

In the presence of mine enemies...

THAT'S HOPE!

Thou annointest my head with oil...

THAT'S CONSECRATION!

My cup runs over...

THAT'S ABUNDANCE!

Surely goodness and mercy shall

Follow me all the days of my life...

THAT'S BLESSING!

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord...

THAT'S SECURITY!

Forever...

THAT'S ETERNITY!

Amen (So be it).

From "A Bucket of Surprises" by J. John and M. Stibbe

**Submitted by**

**Rita Braes**



## **Guild Diary**



**Theme: Companions on the Road**  
**Topic: Our Journey Past Present and Future**

### **2020**

22 January     Scottish Bible Society

5 February     Project Sailors' Society

19 February     TBA

4 March     Theme Night

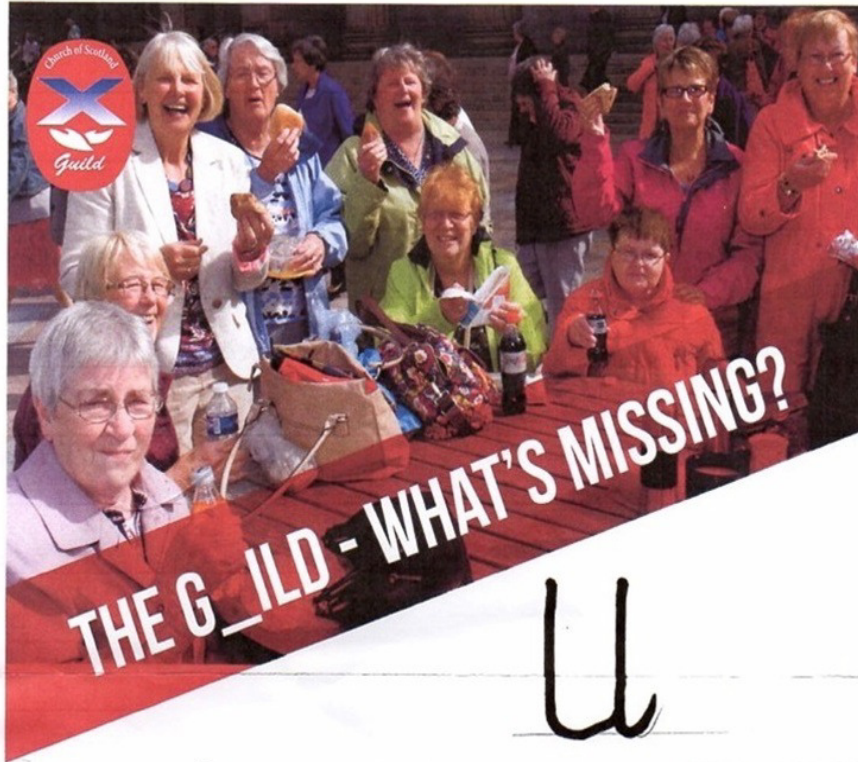
18 March     ABM Fellowship Supper

TBA April     Fundraiser

Join us Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm in Shieldhill church hall  
Faith, fellowship and fun always on offer.

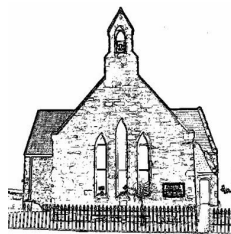
**Lorna Coulter**





We'd love to see U

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE GUILD AT [WWW.COS-GUILD.ORG.UK](http://WWW.COS-GUILD.ORG.UK)



## **Who's Who**

### **Interim Moderator**

Rev Dr Jean W Gallacher

### **Locum**

Rev Sandra Mathers OLM

